



# THE RESPONDER

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE • JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER  
OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM • DECEMBER 2011



## Spill Closes Texas City Dike

**O**n August 19, Advanced Response Officer Maren Harding, a member of the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program, received word of a spill in the Port of Texas City. Harding arrived only to learn that the Texas City Dike had been evacuated, port operations had been ceased and Garner Environmental was attempting to contain the leading edge of the spill. A tank barge had been overfilled and released approximately 35 barrels of fuel oil on the deck of the barge and into the Ship Channel. U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Texas City personnel were on-site with Harding to assess the impacted area.

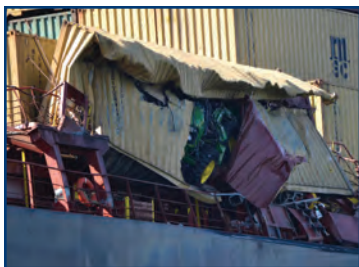
An Incident Command Post was quickly established at BP Texas City Refinery since the incident occurred at one of its docks. Buffalo Marine Services, the responsible party, worked closely with the U.S. Coast Guard, the GLO and the City of Texas City to reopen the dike, resume all port operations and remediate the spill. The dike was reopened to the public within 14 hours of the incident.

The week-long cleanup had a happy ending with the release of a pelican that had been oiled during the incident. Rhonda Murgatroyd of Wildlife Response Services oversaw the rehabilitation and release of the pelican. All parties involved, from incident to wildlife release, did an outstanding job of returning the Port of Texas City and the adjacent Texas City Dike to pre-spill conditions.



A brown pelican stretching his wings after a stay in captivity resulting from oiling in Texas City.

## Vessel Collisions Can Yield Unusual Results

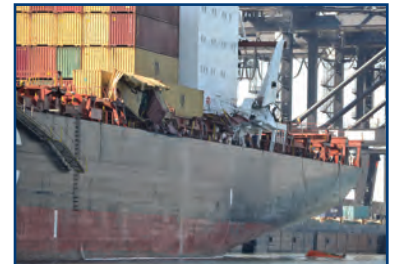


A damaged container leaked hydraulic oil into the Bayport Ship Channel.

It was the damaged container that resulted in the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program's involvement.

**O**n Saturday, October 29, two vessels collided near the Bayport Ship Channel in Houston. Tank vessel *Elka Apollon* and container vessel *MSC Nederland*'s unplanned encounter left both vessels damaged. Three containers from the *MSC Nederland* ended up on board the *Elka Apollon* and another container

Inside the damaged container aboard the *MSC Nederland* were John Deere tractors that leaked hydraulic oil due to damage sustained during the collision. Advanced Response Officer Maren Harding arrived on scene to a mass of mangled metal and a John Deere tractor hanging precariously over the side of the container vessel. The pollution incident was minor, but serves as a reminder to everyone in and around the shipping and oil spill industries to stay alert and prepared at all times.



The *MSC Nederland* sustained damage during a collision with the *Elka Apollon*.

## Sharp Eyes Catch Unusual Debris



Tests conducted by the Sheriff's Department confirmed the "bricks" contained cocaine.

**D**uring a routine beach patrol in Matagorda last September, a Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program employee discovered marine debris that looked out of place. Upon closer inspection, the tightly bundled packages appeared to be some sort of

illegal substance. The Matagorda County Sheriff's Department was contacted and conducted field tests that confirmed suspicions. The six packages were bundles of cocaine, with a street value estimated at \$100,000. The Sheriff's Department took possession of the bundles, removing the drugs from the beach and keeping it off the streets.



Six packages like these, each bearing a "Batman" logo, were found in Matagorda.

EDUCATE ♦ PREVENT ♦ RESPOND

# GLO Presents Annual OSPRA Awards

Every year the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program honors individuals, organizations and/or companies that go above and beyond their normal duties where oil spill education, prevention and response are concerned. Please join us in congratulating the 2011 Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act (OSPRA) awardees.



Marcus Woodring, Capt. USCG, retired, 2011 OSPRA recipient for his leadership of Sector Houston-Galveston. Photo courtesy of Port of Houston Authority.

U.S. Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston is the overarching command that covers the Upper Texas Coast from Matagorda Bay to the Sabine-Neches Waterway. The OSPRA award was given to the entire sector to recognize its efforts in Texas as a strong partner with the state in oil pollution prevention and response operations.

In 2010, Marine Safety Unit Port Arthur responded to the *Eagle Otome* spill, the largest maritime oil spill in Texas in 20 years. Marine Safety Office Texas City was on the front line of the Deepwater Horizon response, and Sector Command served as the Federal On-Scene Commander for the Deepwater Horizon response in

Texas. Both MSU Port Arthur and Sector Command jointly chair Area Committees with the Land Office Oil Spill Program to prepare plans for responding to oil spills. Captain Marcus Woodring, U.S. Coast Guard retired, wrote "As an organization, the U.S. Coast Guard is here to support the great state of Texas and the fabulous responders of GLO."

Recognizing the significance of this partnership, and knowing that it could not happen without strong leadership at the head of



Xtreme Scrap & Recycle receives a 2011 OSPRA award from the GLO for its excellence in protecting navigable waters by removing abandoned vessels and structures in the area.

the organization, the GLO also awarded an OSPRA to Capt. Woodring, who was the Sector Commander during the above mentioned responses and always strived to maintain all response partnerships. It was his strong leadership that allowed all under him and those in responses with him to be successful.

Another strong partnership can be found in South Texas. Alfonso Guillen has been an avid supporter and friend of the GLO since 1997. He has partnered on many projects and been an expert witness during spill events. Guillen is the Vice President of Student Learning at Texas State Technical College and has used his position to further the efforts of the GLO and his students. His students are welcome participants at industry- and GLO-led drills, conduct numerous different scientific studies on response strategies and receive training from the GLO on technical oil spill equipment. His faithful service over the past 14 years in partnership with the GLO and his commitment to his students has earned him the 2011 OSPRA Award.



Regional Director Richard Arnhart awarding Captain James Whitehead III with a 2011 OSPRA award for the entire Sector Houston-Galveston staff.



Senior Response Officer Joseph Hilliard presents a 2011 OSPRA Award to Al Guillen, VP of Student Learning, Texas State Technical College.

A major focus in Texas coastal water has been the removal of derelict vessels and structures. One company has continually gone above and beyond to help the GLO rid the coast of these hazardous eyesores. Xtreme Scrap and Recycle has partnered with the GLO to remove over 8,000 tons of debris at no cost to the state. The company has worked on projects from Port Arthur to Brownsville, positively affecting the entire coast and making the waters of the state safer for all users.

## Clarification on "Helping Educate Local Educators" Article

The Lighthouse Lakes Paddling Trail is located within the Redfish Bay State Scientific Area (RBSSA). The Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission (TPWC) enacted a regulation stating "Within the RBSSA, no person shall cause or allow any rooted seagrass plant to be uprooted or dug out from the bay bottom by a submerged propeller, except as may be permitted by a coastal

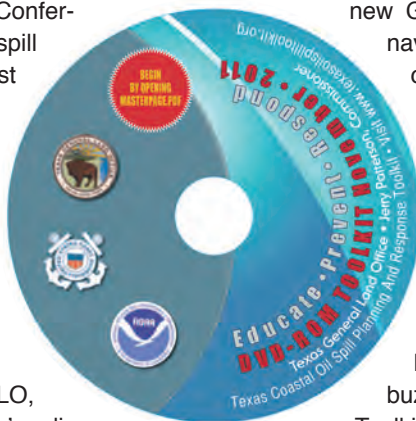
lease issued by the Texas General Land Office or otherwise permitted under State law." While no area within the RBSSA is closed to boating, the responsibility of not damaging sensitive seagrass habitat is up to the boater. For further information on the RBSSA and seagrass protection, visit the following TPWC website: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us>.



# Latest Oil Spill Toolkit Now Available

The Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program announces the 13th annual revision of the Texas Coastal Oil Spill Planning and Response Toolkit. The free Toolkit was introduced at the 2011 Clean Gulf Conference in San Antonio. Designed to provide the spill planning and response community with the best available information and resources for coastal oil spill response, the 2011 DVD Toolkit contains: Area Contingency Plans; more than 400 maps covering Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama; RRT VI documents; ICS forms; software applications; Internet links for oceanographic and meteorological information; state and federal plans; and many other important spill-related reference documents.

The DVD Toolkit is a joint effort between the GLO, NOAA and U.S. Coast Guard District 8. This year's edition contains many new features and updates including the



2011 One Gulf Plan and updates for all ACPs in USCG District 8. The Toolkit also includes: updated Geographic Response Plans (GRPs) for Sectors Corpus Christi and Houston-Galveston, new GRPs for MSU Lake Charles, improved GRP navigation with new Index Maps, the USCG Incident Specific Preparedness Review for the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, new material for Natural Disaster Operational Workgroup ESF-10 Standard Operating Procedures, the addition of the ICS 214a Individual Log form, and the updated Regional Response Team VI member directory.

The DVD Toolkit is available free of charge to the spill response community by contacting Dr. Buzz Martin at 512-475-4611 or by writing to [buzz.martin@glo.texas.gov](mailto:buzz.martin@glo.texas.gov). You can also see the Toolkit online at its new Web address at <http://www.texasoilspilltoolkit.org>.

## Texas, Louisiana Forge Agreement with USCG

On September 2, representatives from Texas and Louisiana met with the Eighth Coast Guard District (USCG) senior staff in New Orleans to explore ways to better coordinate the removal of derelict vessels and structures in coastal Louisiana and Texas. The USCG will take care of getting rid of the contaminants, while the two states will get rid of the targeted items.

The state of Louisiana requested the meeting to discuss approaches to remediating fluid contaminants frequently found during the removal and disposal of coastal derelict vessels and structures. State personnel are working hard to organize the removal of some 600 derelict vessels identified during the extensive cleanup of its coastal waterways in the aftermaths of the 2005 and 2008 hurricanes. These are all vessels that were ineligible for FEMA funding, because they were not related to the disasters. In addition to posing threats to health and safety, they blight the waterways of the "Sportsman's Paradise."

Lee Richardson, State Marine Debris Coordinator with Louisiana's Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) invited the General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program (GLO) to participate in the USCG meeting. Richardson was interested in the GLO's success in removing more than 450 vessels and structures over the last five years, at little cost to the state. Also representing Louisiana was Garrett Broussard, PE, Senior Operations Engineer with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana. Representing the GLO were Bill Grimes, Derelict Vessel and Structure Removal Program Manager, and J.T. Ewing, Director of Region 1, Nederland.

The USCG was represented by Captain Peter Troedson, Chief of Staff; Captain Edward Cubanski, III, Chief, Incident Management Branch; Captain Jonathon Burton, Commanding Officer of the Marine Safety Unit in Morgan City; Captain Peter Gautier, New Orleans Sector Commander; and several other District Eight staff members.

The discussion revolved around the guidelines for the USCG's authority to access the Oil Spill Liability Trust

Fund to cover the costs of removing pollutants from vessels that pose a threat to coastal waters. The fund does not cover the actual removal of vessels. While implementing its Derelict Vessel and Structures Removal Program over the past five years, the GLO has had good success working with the USCG's Sector Commands in Texas. They competently oversaw the removal of contaminants, while the state handled the actual removal and disposal of the vessels and structures. Richardson said he truly appreciated the opportunity for Louisiana to learn from the GLO's success.

An agreement-in-principal was reached among the participants that the USCG would partner with both Louisiana and Texas to collaborate even more closely to facilitate communication and paperwork. As mentioned above, the USCG will assess and oversee removal of contaminants, while each state will take care of removing the offending vessels or structures. This agreement builds on the strengths and resources of each of the partners, which will benefit marine environments, coastal economies and human safety and welfare.



This abandoned vessel was removed from Texas coastal waters a few years ago.

# Oil Spill “Machines in Action”

The Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program has been invited to participate in making a video of its oil spill “Machines in Action.” The video is a project associated with the Jason Project, a nationwide program for high school students interested in science. Dr. Jim Westgate, professor of Earth and Space Sciences at Lamar University and host for the Jason Project, asked Oil Spill Program staff members if they could videotape some of the Jason Project student scientists—known as Argonauts—along with boats and skimmers to show how machines and forces work in the oil spill industry.

A main focus in this year’s “Terminal Velocity—Investigating Forces and Motion in Our Universe” program will be the machines in action on the Deep Water Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The video will be shown when Jason Project founder Dr. Bob Ballard visits Lamar University on January 31, 2012.

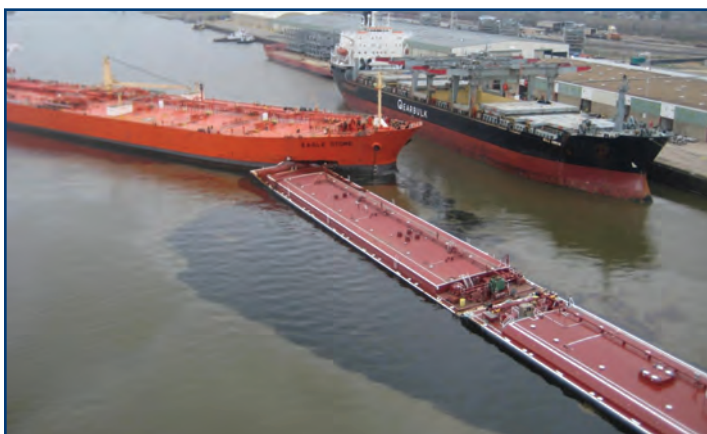
## Land Office Turns *Eagle Otome* Spill Into Better Parks

Port Arthur parks will soon get upgrades as part of a settlement the General Land Office reached over the *Eagle Otome* spill, which put nearly 397,000 gallons of crude oil into the Port Arthur Ship Channel. American Eagle Tankers has agreed to pay more than \$313,000 to improve Walter Humphrey Park, as well as the historic Sabine Pass Battleground State Historic Site.

“Thanks to our planning and pre-positioned manpower and equipment, an environmental catastrophe was avoided,” said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. “This settlement will be a great benefit to Port Arthur and help preserve part of our state’s history. That’s a good deal by any account.”

On January 23, 2010, the *Eagle Otome* collided with a barge, ripping a hole in its hull and causing the biggest Texas oil spill in 20 years. But an immediate response from the Land Office’s Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program, the U.S. Coast Guard and area first-responders contained the spill in the ship channel, protecting Keith Lake in the J.D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area, one of the most pristine estuarine reserves in the state.

“Our Oil Spill Prevention and Response Team is world-renowned for its preparedness and response capability,” Patterson said. “In other states, this spill would have been an environmental disaster—but here in Texas, we know how to take care of our coast, and our history. Texans should be proud.”



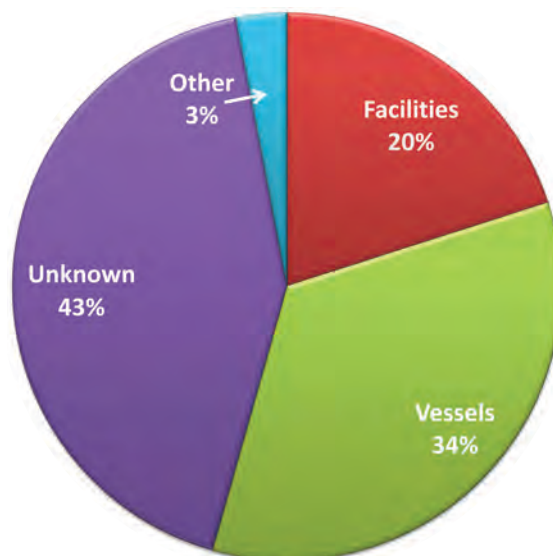
The *Dixie Vengeance* left a gaping hole in the *Eagle Otome* during the 2010 incident.



Regional Director J.T. Ewing talks to Argonauts about drum skimmers and spill response.

## FY 2011 By the Numbers

### Percentage of Spills by Source



### Number of Reported Oil Spills

636

### Three Largest Oil Spills by Volume

Jacob Stern & Son, January 4, 2011  
Houston Ship Channel - 15,000 Gallons

The Premcor Refining Group, January 15, 2011  
Taylor Bayou Turning Basin - 2,268 Gallons

Transmontaigne Border Terminal, January 25, 2011  
Brownsville Ship Channel - 2,241 Gallons

### Number of Certified Facilities

603

### Number of Vessel Companies Registered with GLO

2,608



# GLO hosts Information Transfer Meetings

**A**s part of an ongoing effort to promote public education, the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program hosted two Information Transfer Meetings (ITMs) in August. The aim of an ITM is to gather local industry, the public and local, state and federal regulatory agencies under one roof to discuss regulatory and environmental issues affecting coastal communities.

The Port Lavaca Field Office had much to discuss at the meeting it sponsored, especially new oil “fracking” technologies and the Eagle Ford Shale formation that have caused a recent boom in the trucking industry, barge traffic, and new facilities along the Gulf Coast. Representatives from the Ports of Calhoun County, Palacios and Victoria spoke about growth in the region and numerous new transfer facilities that have opened in the area over the last year. The GLO also presented statistics on the removal of navigation hazards through the Derelict Vessel and Structure Program.

With so much oil-related commerce based in coastal waters, it’s beneficial for regulatory agencies and industry to work together to keep Texas commerce safe and prosperous. In an effort to recognize those who go beyond what is required, the GLO presented Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act Awards (OSPRA) to both Xtreme Scrap and Recycle and Manuel Rodriguez from Prestige Oyster for their exemplary leadership in the community and dedication to keeping a clean and safe environment.

The Brownsville ITM was attended by the U.S. Coast Guard, local industry representatives, the Port of Brownsville and various local, state and federal agencies. Presenters included Raymond Oliveira (GLO), LT Jensen (USCG), Mayor Joe Vega (City of Port Isabel), Ruben Trevino (City of South Padre Island) and Joseph Hilliard (GLO). Presentations by the GLO and the USCG covered spills of interest, compliance and derelict vessel and structure removal projects. Both state and federal agencies informed the public about current projects that impact the community along the coast. Local city officials enlightened the public on new environmental restoration and beach renourishment projects in the area.

This year’s Brownsville ITM turned out to be a great success with more than 50 participants ranging from stakeholders to members of the public. The meeting provided information on the overall function of oil spill prevention and response and how the ongoing technical projects will benefit the environment and economy of the local community.

ITMs are a series of public education meetings held along the Texas coast and sponsored by the



Brownsville Area Manager Raymond Oliveira and Senior Response Officer Joseph Hilliard address the ITM attendees.

GLO. Updates are provided and discussions are held on the latest coastal issues in the region where an ITM is held. The meetings offer a great opportunity to meet GLO staff members and establish relationships.

## Upcoming Meetings

### Central Texas Coastal Area Committee Meeting

will be held Thursday, December 8, in conjunction with the “All Hazards Summit-Houston” at Hyatt Regency Houston, 1200 Louisiana Street, Houston, TX 77002. For more information contact the La Porte Field Office at 281-470-6597.

### SE Texas/SW Louisiana Coastal Area Committee

will meet in December. Date and location are to be determined. For more information contact the Nederland Field Office at 409-727-7481.

### South Texas Coastal Zone Area Committee

quarterly meeting will be held on January 25 at 1 p.m. in Port Lavaca. Location is to be determined. For more information contact the Port Lavaca Field Office at 361-552-8081.

### The MEXUSGULF Annex Concept & Objective Meeting/ Initial Planning Conference

will be held January 10-11 at the Isla Grand Beach resort on South Padre Island. Event registration will be at 7:30 a.m. on Jan. 10. The meeting will last from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days. Registration is open to federal, state and local governments. For more information contact the Corpus Christi Field Office at 361-825-3300.

# "Careers in the Outdoors" Summer Camp

In August, Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program personnel participated in "Careers in the Outdoors," the annual Eddie V. Gray Wetlands Center summer camp program. The camp activities are designed to inform young people about various outdoor career opportunities and at the same time promote environmental awareness.

During the event, Senior Response Officer II Craig Kar-tye, with help from Advanced Response Officer Rob Hadley, Qualified Response Officer Bob Brock, and Regional Director Rich Arnhart, talked about their jobs at the Land Office, as well as the threats oil spills pose to Galveston Bay. The discussion focused on where oil spills come from, how they can be prevented, what effect spills have on the bay's diverse ecosystem, and how they're cleaned up. After the presentation, participants were given the opportunity to clean up small spills of vegetable oil created in the Center's lab using a small demonstration skimmer and sorbent pads. The day concluded with an airboat ride in Goose Creek.



Advanced Response Officer Rob Hadley takes students for an airboat ride on Goose Creek.

## Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Division Points of Contact

### Austin

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Austin, Texas  
78711-2873  
512-475-1575

### Port Arthur

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Nederland, Texas  
77627-6255  
409-727-7481

### La Porte

11811 North D Street  
La Porte, Texas  
77571-9135  
281-470-6597

### Corpus Christi

6300 Ocean Drive, Ste. 2425  
Corpus Christi, Texas  
78412-5599  
361-825-3300

### Brownsville

2145 EMS Lane  
Brownsville, Texas  
78521-2666  
956-504-1417

### Port Lavaca

414 Travis Street  
Port Lavaca, Texas  
77979-2351  
361-552-8081

**Report oil spills**  
**1-800-832-8224**  
**24 hours**

The Responder is published by the Texas General Land Office. Questions and comments may be submitted to Maren Harding via email at [maren.harding@glo.texas.gov](mailto:maren.harding@glo.texas.gov) or by phone at 281-470-6597.

## GIUE Held in Aransas Pass

On August 17, the U.S. Coast Guard, in conjunction with the Texas General Land Office, conducted a Government Initiated Unannounced Exercise (GIUE) at Martin Midstream Fuel Service in Aransas Pass. Upon arrival of USCG and GLO personnel, a facility dock man was provided with an oil spill simulation. The scenario consisted of a ruptured transfer line, resulting in 50 barrels of diesel being released into coastal waters.

As the USCG and GLO personnel watched, the dock man shut down the transfer and notified the front office. The facility began the process of making notifications while following its response plan. On-site personnel deployed boom to contain the spill, and the company contacted its Oil Spill Response Organization, which arrived soon afterward with additional equipment to clean up the simulated spill. Martin Midstream Fuel Service met the exercise objectives of an effective response.

The purpose of a GIUE is to ensure that a facility is able to adequately respond to a spill and effectively use the facility response plan. Each facility develops a specific response plan—which must be approved by both the USCG and the GLO—that details a step-by-step process to follow in the event of a spill.

GIUEs allow facilities and vessels to demonstrate their preparedness in case of an oil spill. While going through the process, oil-handling facilities and vessels learn where they can improve their respective responses. GIUEs give everyone involved the experience that's essential in the event of an actual oil spill. These drills also help USCG and GLO personnel better understand local facility operations as well as their environmental and economic concerns.



GLO and U.S. Coast Guard personnel monitor containment boom deployment during the GIUE at Martin Midstream Fuel Service in Aransas Pass.